

Songs In Many Keys

GEORGE BURCHARD

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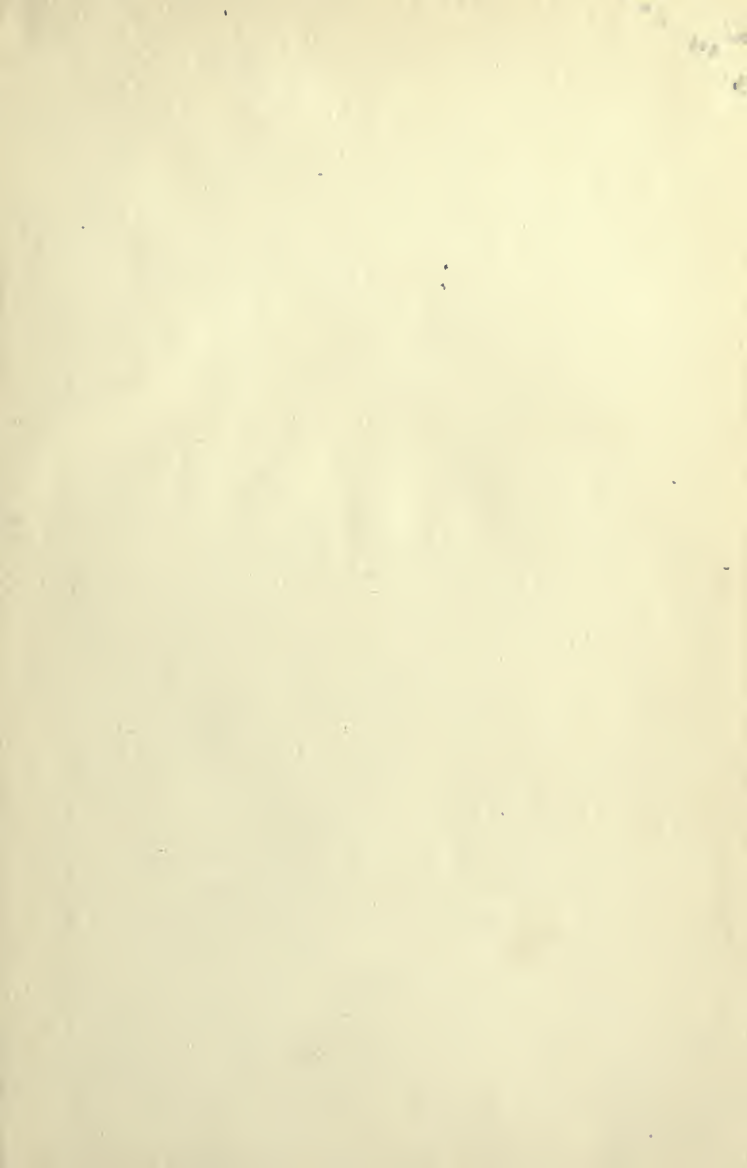
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**Songs
In Many Keys**

Geo Burchard
creator
copy.

Songs In Many Keys

BY GEORGE BURCHARD

of Arcata, Calif.



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(Incorporated)

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George Burchard, Arcata, Calif.

PREFACE

The poems contained in this Book of Verse have been pitched in various keys, according to the nature of the thought and feelings which dominate the themes.

It seems sufficient to express the hope that some of these songs may awaken a responsive chord in the heart of the reader.

GEORGE BURCHARD

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**Songs
In Many Keys**

Songs In Many Keys



ROBERT OF LINCOLN.

I.

When the long and dreamy days of June
Linger on the endless prairie-land,
Sweet, oh Bobolink, that warbling tune!
Life's best riches come at your command!

Piebald singer, rollicking with mirth,
Swaying from some simple homely weed,
Trilling to your nestlings on the earth,
Soon will pinions aid your joyful speed!

With a sudden flirt you upward spring,
Leave behind the well-screen'd, grassy nest,
Mounting, mounting, while you sing and sing,—
Life for you holds nothing but the best!

Songs In Many Keys

II.

I have heard a doubtful story
Of your curious transformations,
Changes wrought in voice and plumage,
From my well-known meadow-singer
(Dress'd in black and very proper)
To a bird whose reputation
Scarce would stand a close inspection;
But I'm loath to give it credence.
Stories of the evil doings
Must be proved, ere I believe them,
Of my singer of the meadows!
Characters are built up slowly,
And the life you have been leading,
All the days of balmy summer,
Proves you love your wife and children,
Love the sunshine and its brightness,
And the waving of the grasses!
How could such a bird as you were,
Always careful of your duties,

Songs In Many Keys

Always singing out of gladness,
With a heart whose throbs were praises,—
How could you become a spendthrift?
Pass your days in ribald chatter,
Down among the reeds and sedges,
Deck'd in feathers brown and sombre—
Like the common birds of passage,—
Swarming on the bending rushes,
Waiting there with countless thousands,
Till the huntsman came to find you?

How could you become a gourmand
Later, in the southern rice-fields?
Pass the sunny days in eating!
With a crowd of hungry comrades
Settling, thick as bees at swarming,
Where the rice-stalks grow the rankest?

Tales like these they have been telling
Of the double-life you're leading,—
But, my Robert, I know better
Than to listen to such prattle!
All the days of balmy summer

Songs In Many Keys

Prove you love your wife and children,
Love the sunshine and its brightness,
Love the waving of the grasses!
Well I know you've done your duty,
Sung your song whose notes were gladness,
With a heart whose throbs were praises!

'Tis by such things I remember
What your life has been among us;
And 'tis useless for these prophets
To predict your future downfall,
When the wealth of waving rice-fields
Works the ruin of its robbers—
To such tales I give no credence!

III.

Then sing with a will while the day is advancing!
On the top of the hill, how the sunbeams are
dancing!
The tall grasses nod, there's a stir in the trees,
The bounty of God is borne with the breeze.

Songs In Many Keys

Up, up and away, your swift course be winging,
'Tis best to greet day with music and singing;
A song for your mate, who follows your flight,
As you soar to the gate, to the fountain of light!

The day is at hand, who cares for the morrow!
As a mist from the land, light scatters all sorrow!
Sing, Robert, oh sing! with a voice free of care!
Let the whole valley ring, for the morning is fair!

A MOUNTAIN SONG.

Tho' I dwell here in the valley,
Heart and thought are far away;
Tho' I hear the blithe lark whistling,
Sounding welcome to the day,
Yet I'm yearning for the mountains—
Sunburst lights and shadows gray!

Songs In Many Keys

Have you seen the waking Sunrise,
Painting on a rose-hued sky?
Dashing o'er the Night's dark splendor,
Gorgeous shades of Eastern dye?
Mingling colors that the artists
Have in vain essayed to try?

Have you seen the purpling mountain,
Looming, massive, in the light;
Seen the glowing clouds above you,
Flaming pillars turning white?
Then you know why I am dreaming—
Longing for the mountain-height.

In those high and silent forests,
Roam we free the hunter's ground!
Where the deer his haunt is making,
Mid the solitudes profound!
Where the pine trees stand defiant,
Battling, while the storms surge 'round!

Songs In Many Keys

THE MEADOW-LARK.

Oft we hear at dawn of day
Nature's music start to play:
Flutes and organs, rustling leaves,
Crickets chirping mid the sheaves,—
Loud and clear above them all
Breaks the meadow-lark's sweet morning call!

Ere the sun has kissed the ground,
Liquid notes, with flute-like sound,
Greet the coming of the light,
Banish sombre shades of night;
While the earth in glad surprise,
Shakes the dewdrops from her drowsy eyes.

Thro' the dusk there comes a note
From some feather'd chorister's throat;
Then another answers clear,—
Some afar and some anear;
Soon the chorus richly swells,
Ech'ing down the woods and shady dells.

Songs In Many Keys

Dun and yellow are his clothes;
Every boy this songster knows:
Knows his whistle, blithe and gay,
Good to drive bad dreams away!
Always merry, never still,
Singer of the vale and sunny hill!

HYMN TO THE MORNING.

With joy we hear at break of day
The voice of Nature speak alway
The self-same song, first heard by man,
When earth, new-form'd, her course began.
In bleat of lamb, in tuneful lark,
Tho' no progression we can mark—
Far diff'rent they from human-kind
Who speech improve with growth of mind—
Yet all such natural tones inspire,
And warm the heart with lambent fire.

Songs In Many Keys

For large the wealth of Nature's store;
A task unending to explore.
Like Newton on a shore we stand,
And mys'tries view on ev'ry hand.
The world is wide, the outlook broad;
Before such grandeur we stand awed;
Or join us in the hymn of praise
Which each succeeding dawn doth raise;
For why alone should man be mute
When mountain, bird, and each dumb brute
Extol in songs of rarest art
The throbbings of their common heart?
The call of bird upon the lea
Is music full of ecstasy;
The whispering of the rustling wind
Is music to the listening mind;
The distant roar of waterfall
Is music meet for such high hall,—

Songs In Many Keys

Where arching dome, a crystal sphere,
Resoundeth ever to the ear
With all sweet sounds that stir the heart,
And strength and God-like grace impart.
The word that's heard on grove and hill
Possesses power thy soul to fill:
Then let us join the hymn of praise
Which Nature's children all upraise!
Then let us join with one accord
In Nature's hymn unto the Lord!

MOUNTAIN PINES—A SONG.

See the pine trees dark above you!
Hear the west wind's harp at play!
When the ocean-child, at evening,
Blows t'ward land,—the fog-cloud gray—
When the mountain forests murmur,
At the quiet close of day.

Songs In Many Keys

Homeward now the shag is flying,
Piping quail has ceased his note;
When the light has turned to shadow
Hush'd is every songster's throat,—
When around the pine-clad summits
Sea-born cloud-banks slowly float.

Soon the twilight fades to darkness,
Like some dim, mysterious cave,
Lit by countless gems that sparkle—
Dark the silence as the grave;
But the pine trees keep on sighing,
While their wind-toss'd branches wave!

HOW DAY EXCELS THE NIGHT.

The stars have wondrous beauty,
The night is very fair;
Yet daylight is far better,
Because the sun is there!
He starts the world to singing
And brings joy everywhere!

Songs In Many Keys

My heart is full of music
When th' robin in the tree
Is piping forth a greeting,
His daybreak melody;
Across the fragrant meadows,
Life sounds a jubilee!

The sun ascends in glory,
The world is bathed in light;
The mountains loom, refulgent
With fields of snowy white;
The wide earth sings with gladness,
How day excels the night!

Oh music of the morning!
Oh breaking of the day!
Oh splendor of the dawn-light!
When darkness turns to gray:
Impart to me your grandeur
And I shall sing alway!

Songs In Many Keys

DAYBREAK.

The leaden East is lit by early Dawn:

First pale, then bright, upstreams the glowing light

Of rising sun; the erstwhile stars withdrawn

Have vanish'd with the gloomy shades of Night.

The birds awaken'd greet approaching Day;

The cock starts drumming on the lowland lea;

The ghost-like mists, roll'd silently away,

Soon scatter, leaving verdant meadows free.

The spring wind rising, bends the nodding grass,

And draws from every bush Æolian tones;

The swift-wing'd swallows twitter as they pass,

The brooklet chatters with its moss-grown stones.

Songs In Many Keys

On high the wild goose steers an outward
course,

Announcing loudly by his uncouth cries
His near approach, while huntsmen in the gorse
Await with loaded guns and straining eyes.

Long time, ere this, the lark has sought the sky,
The dull earth spurn'd, his late despis'd abode,
And whilst his matin song pours forth, his eye
Surveys broad fields and distant winding road.

In sheltered yard the lowing cattle call;
Melodious songs stir with the rising breeze:
Like chime of distant murm'ring waterfall
Such music hath strange power to lull and
please.

All this I see, these things half-dreaming hear;
The Earth hath woke; ev'n drowsy, lazy man
Hath risen! No longer tarry, day is near;
Shun not thy 'custom'd work; life's but a
span!

Songs In Many Keys

AFTER THE STORM.

The storm had ceased,—a flood of light
Went shimm'ring 'cross the lakes and hills;
The rain had pass'd,—a thousand rills
Rolled babbling by in headlong flight.

The mountains flamed with gold and browns,
Where broken grasses knee-deep lay;
The green salal and pungent bay
Like em'ralsds gleamed, on the spreading downs.

Along the beach the white sea poured,
And wildly beat upon the sand;
A dream of peace smiled o'er the land,—
But the sullen ocean hoarsely roared!

Songs In Many Keys

THE SISKIYOU.

How huge the bold peaks of the Siskiyoun mountains,

Where rearing t'ward heaven, sheer summits
so high!

How white gleam the snows—all those cool,
crystal fountains,

Whence waters come tumbling as tho' from
the sky.

Hid deep in the gorges, the cataracts roar,

The wild music sounding of ten thousand rills;
And far t'wards the summits, so covered with
hoar,

The long-needed pines chant their hymn to
the hills.

The blue of the sky, as it's arched overhead,

Is match'd by the azure that purples the land;
The view of such colors, tho' painting were
dead

Should train from a peasant a world's
master-hand!

Songs In Many Keys

Translucently clear, and resplendently bright—
Those wide-stretching rivers of ice and of
snow;
Upon their broad wastes, in the Morn's early
light,
Flash colors as brilliant as iris-hued bow.

While far to the eastward the Shasta peak
stands,
The home of the spirits, the Siskiyou's dread;
And off to the westward, in Siskiyou lands,
The chiefs pitch their hutches, near Trinity
Head.

Then hail to the mountains, the Siskiyou
Ranges,
Where hooded in snow and deep tinted with
blue,
Unmindful of Time and his multiform changes,
These giants of yore rear their heads into
view!

Songs In Many Keys

THE REFORMER'S CREED.

If the world should scoff at you,
Talk and chatter at your ways,
Mocking at your so-called "craze,"
Finding fault with what you do:

If the world should laugh at you,
Criticise the Faith you hold—
Faith as pure as furnace-gold—
Shallow mockers are not few:

If the gossips of the town,
Turn to speak in cold derision
Of your firm and just decision,
Not to let your Creed go down:

Would it change your constant plan?
Change your faith in God above?
Change your trust in Truth and Love?
Would you cease your work for Man?

Songs In Many Keys

LET MY PEOPLE GO!

Ye who plan to win by greed,
Scorning at the People's need,
Halting not at means and ways;
Fear ye not the coming days?

Let my People go!

Ye who seek for Place and Power,
Plotting evil every hour,
Bribing those—the slaves of gold,
Men whose souls are bought and sold—

Let my People go!

Ye who forge the chains of steel,—
Have ye hearts that throb and feel?
Have ye ears? Then hear that sound
As its thunders shake the ground—

Let my People go!

Old Rameses heard that cry,
Saw the signs with scornful eye;
Pharaoh heard it, but too late
To avert his dreadful fate!

Let my People go!

Songs In Many Keys

On the ranches, in the field,
See how Nature's harvests yield!
Will ye rob the People's grain?
By extortion make ye gain?

Let my People go!

In the shops the toilers sweat,
Do ye think such men forget?
List ye, ere ye drink your fill,
Hear the Ages calling shrill:

Let my People go!

Thieves who loot the marts of Trade!
Do ye think this world was made,
Framed to give freebooters place,
Room to grind the poor man's face?

Let my People go!

Let them go! 'tis I who call—
I, who framed this world for all;
To my People everywhere
I will grant their rightful prayer:

Let my People go!

Songs In Many Keys

WHO IS MY MASTER?

Who is my master?—Who, I say,
Presumes my life to rule?
Who sets the bounds to hedge my way?
Who claims me for Time's fool?

And I, a man, a freeman born!
Am I to bow the knee?
You think I quake because of scorn—
Your soul was never free!

Base child of circumstance and fears!
Vain creature of dread Fate!
Live on—aye, grovel thro' the years—
Afraid to go or wait!

Who is my master? Do you ask?
Think you I'll live a slave,
That man's opinions set my task?
Let others play the knave!

Songs In Many Keys

I am free-born! The lash of Time
May fall and cut or mar;
My road leads on to heights sublime—
I follow Faith's clear star!

SAILING ROOM FOR ALL.

How wide, how wide, the boundless sea!
How far the course from shore to shore!
How vast is all eternity,—
An endless road forevermore!

The dome-like sky spreads everywhere,—
Unmeasured depths of crystal blue,
An all-surrounding gulf of air,
Where Time and Space seem lost to view!

Ah, yes, and many ships set sail,
And spread their white wings to the breeze;
And dash thro' foam with fresh'ning gale;
But all find room upon Life's seas!

Songs In Many Keys

DISCHARGING A DEBT.

My thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
That thou hadst time and thought to lend
To one, perchance, who feels today
A debt he cannot hope to pay;
And yet he knows thy gifts are given
As free as sunlight streams from heaven!

More precious than the yellow gold,
Or wealth which India's princes hold,
Thy gifts have come from out the heart,
And of thy kindness take a part:
Enriching both thyself and me,—
What gifts, than such, could worthier be?

Songs In Many Keys

THE VOYAGE OF LIFE.

Whatever comes, receive the gift
With firm and tranquil mind;
Those barks are lost which idly drift
The prey of ev'ry wind.

The compass is a man's best friend
When on the boisterous sea;
Belief in Good as life's true end
Will be such friend to thee.

The faith that strongly looks to Him
Who rules the mighty deep,
No cloud-like doubts his course shall dim,
No storms such bark o'ersweep.

Who is it falters at the gate,
Nor dares to put to sea?
Why longer in the harbor wait?
Since God will pilot thee.

Songs In Many Keys

LOVE'S CHAIN.

The sky is bright in cloudless June,
When ech'ing to the lark's wild tune;
As lovely bright thy face to me,
Thy love, who madly worships thee.

The rose is fair in early May,
That spreads its colors to the day;
So fair thy laughing lips to see—
Those lips that speak such sympathy.

The cloud-cast sky is dark at night,
When moon and stars obscure their light;
How black thy flashing eye, and dark!
I tremble, when its frown I mark.

But when with words of sweetest grace,
Thou turn'st on me a lover's face,
My trembling heart fresh hope regains,
And Life grows joyous, 'neath Love's chains.

Songs In Many Keys

TO A DEPARTING FRIEND.

I dreamt of thee today, love,
I dreamt of thee, today;
The sun shone bright they say, love,
But my thoughts were far away!

His beams I could not see, love,
For I only thought of thee;
How my heart grew light and free, love,
When thou cam'st to dwell with me!

Yes, the memory is sweet, love,
Tho' never more we meet;
In my inmost heart's retreat, love,
Thy image dwells complete.

It may be for the best, love,
That my heart should feel unrest,
But I'll hold, tho' sore distress'd, love,
Thy image as my guest.

Songs In Many Keys

GOLDEN GATES.

(Tune, Golden Gates.)

Chorus:

Outward, outward, thro' the gate,
Portal to the sunset sea;
Fairest breezes on us wait,
God our pilot be!

Outward, outward, 'cross the bar,
Sweeps our ship with spreading sails,
Making for her port afar,
Hoping prosperous gales.

Let the winds and tempests blow!
Stout's the ship that carries me,
Sailing, sailing as we go,
O'er the sunset sea.

Outward, outward, t'wards the west,
Tossing on the heaving deep,
Riches, honors, are the quest,
As we onward sweep.

Songs In Many Keys

Some set sail to win renown,
Some seek love—a golden prize;
In the deep the Past we'll drown—
Fair are sunset skies.

Hoist the sails, the canvas spread!
Turn the prow to seek the West!
Let the vacant Past lie dead!
Days to come are best!

Ev'ry night the stars will shine;
Ev'ry morn a sunrise brings,
Leave the dregs and drink the wine,—
Life with laughter rings.

Chorus:

Outward, outward, thro' the gate,
Portal to the sunset sea;
Fairest breezes on us wait,
God our pilot be!

Songs In Many Keys

DINING A FRIEND.

I.

THE INVITATION.

An English roast, a pot of tea,
And bread and fruit—it seems to me
That's quite enough to load a table,
To show true hospitality;
We greet our friends as we are able!

And quip, and joke, and happy thought,
'Tis known quite well cannot be bought,—
We always serve 'em with our meat—
They aid digestion, so we're taught,
And make plain food taste rich and sweet.

So if you come to visit town
We'll try right hard to please you, Brown;
One much prefers a place that's cheery
To city taverns of renown;
Without good sauce a meal grows dreary!

Songs In Many Keys

II.

THE MENU.

To save a bit of argument,
We will admit that time's well spent
In cutting roasts and munching bread—
Like animals, man must be fed,—
And having feasted feels content.

With patent sauces' eager fire,
We would be loath our friends to tire,—
You "do not like such 'knock-me-downs?'"
Your choice does credit to the Browns,—
Plain, simple tastes most men admire.

Nor have we yet been much impress'd,
With need of music for our guest,
Or that the din of horns and bones
Should drown melodious human-tones,
And wit and laughter be suppress'd.

Songs In Many Keys

But when the amber tea is pour'd,
We hope you'll share your ample hoard
Of jokes and stories, full of zest;
Be sure and serve us with your best—
Our merry laugh your rich reward!

III.

TABLE-TALK.

"The times are out of joint," you say?
Why, Brown, your indigestion's bad;
You let your stomach have its way
Too much, and so your thoughts are sad.
I hope you'll pardon the intrusion,
No harm is meant by such allusion.

But we'll not spend the hour tonight
In talking of the Things That Are,
But of the Has-Beens' distant flight—
The twinkle of our boyhood's star:
The days when appetite was ruddy
And sounds of nature were our study.

Songs In Many Keys

In summer-time the cat-bird's call
 Would mock us from the thicket's gloom;
The squirrel in the yellow fall
 Would hide within his hollow room,
And scold to see two boys come gunning,
Disturbing rodents from their sunning.

Then on the landscape fell the snow,
 A magic winding-sheet of white;
And wondrous drifts began to grow,
 By elfish hands reared in a night,—
The work so skillfully attended
No Eastern mosque ere loom'd more splendid.

I think, friend Brown, you will recall
 The glory of that rising sun:
When thro' the snow-deck'd forest-hall,
 His frosty beams a road had won;
When God such beauty was bestowing
That every bough with gems was glowing.

Songs In Many Keys

Now, take another cup of tea,

While we draw round that ev'ning fire,

Where in our thoughts we seem to be

Watching the glowing coals expire,

The sweet and luscious cider drinking,—

Of such a scene who could help thinking!

DARK IS THE STORM-CLOUD.

Dark is the storm-cloud, when driven on high

Over the dank and the desolate plain;

Cold falls the down-dripping rain:

Tempest and storm—then God's peace in the
sky!

After the tempest there cometh a calm,

After the wind and the rain there is rest;

That which day bringeth is best:

Tears portend laughter, and life is a psalm!

Songs In Many Keys

After the tempest the lake sleeps in peace;
Bright are the beams of the great ruddy sun;
Clouds flee away, one by one:
After the tempest our troubles shall cease!

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL.

After all is said and done,
Battles lost and battles won;
After all our care and sorrow,
Steps beset by ills we borrow;
Still we cry, amid the strife,
"Oh, how beautiful is life!"

Life is fair to look upon,
Be the battle lost or won;
For we know, if we have fought
As courageous soldiers ought:
Ours is not the task to say
Who shall triumph in the fray.

Songs In Many Keys

FLAG OF OUR FATHERS.

(A NATIONAL SONG.)

Chorus:

The flag of our fathers! The flag of the free!
Your stars in their beauty, how glorious to
see!

Praise the God who hath promised beneath
your bright folds,
All the hopes and the grandeur the fair
Future holds!

Thro' the gloom of the night, like a star in the
sky,

How our banner of light floated proudly on high!
When the hoarse roar of battle came surging
around,

Then our flag, in the van, led the charge o'er the
ground!

Songs In Many Keys

With a song of rejoicing our soldier-boys
come,—

They are sounding their triumph with fife and
with drum.

In the camp and the field they no longer will
roam!

They have brought back the flag of their country
and home!

Now the sun once again sheds his beams on our
land,

And we know that the day of the Lord is at
hand!

He is leading His people, oh, be not dismayed!
Both in peace and in battle our Lord giveth aid.

As we triumphed in war, let us triumph in peace!

As the ages roll onward let freedom increase!

With the coming of day let us welcome the light!

Let us rear up a people for God and the right!

Songs In Many Keys

Chorus:

The flag of our fathers! The flag of the free!
Your stars in their beauty, how glorious to
see!

Praise the God who hath promised beneath
your bright folds,
All the hopes and the grandeur the fair
Future holds!

COURAGE.

Should you hear a tempest roar,
Hear hoarse waves along Life's shore
Bellowing fiercely when they reach the rocky
strand:

Calmly view the tumult loud;
Never fear the angry crowd,
When your feet are planted on the solid land.

Songs In Many Keys

Turn your gaze to watch the sky,
Watch the beacons as they fly
Lighting up the darkness with a wondrous flare:
Bright as gleams the lightning's flash—
Ere resounds the thunder's crash—
Are the signs which hurtle thro' the threat'ning
air.

Mighty is the Cause of Right;
Truth and Honor through the night
Like a beacon light the land and angry sea:
Duty guides you on your way,
Soon you'll greet the coming day,—
Oh, the strength of him whose soul is ever free!

Songs In Many Keys

LINES WRITTEN AT THE DEATH OF WILLIAM McKINLEY.

The earth seems hush'd in blackest gloom!
The martyred hero—he who died
At Duty's post—his country's pride—
Will soon be resting 'neath the tomb.

“Good-bye, good-bye to all!” he said.
These latest words, we hear them still,
Marked by submission to that will,
Which all thro' life his way had led.

But ah! that chant—his last farewell:
“Nearer, my God, to Thee,” he sighs,
And hymns that prayer before he dies,
A song on which ev'n angels dwell!

The thought of that last scene on earth
Must touch the common heart of man,
Respondent, since the world began,
To all that makes for God-like worth.

Songs In Many Keys

All honor for his constant strife
To do what to him seemed the right;
His toils unceasing, day and night,
To lead men to a higher life!

A DIRGE.

The blood-red rays of setting sun,
Shone on the dead;
There had they fallen, one by one—
Those corpses red!

Beneath the stars and midnight's gloom—
Cold, lifeless forms—
How still they lie, without a tomb:
Strange prey for storms!

Songs In Many Keys

HOPE.

Beside a grave a cypress-tree,
A marble column at its head:
These are the signs which mark the dead,—
Sad emblems of mortality!

With tear-stained eyes I stood and gazed
Upon that mould'ring clod of earth;
Nor thought I of that glorious birth
Attained by those whom God hath raised.

But when I upward turned my eyes,
Down thro' those mournful cypress-trees,
Which sadly sighed with every breeze,
The stars were shining from clear skies!

Songs In Many Keys

SONG—IN THE MEADOWS.

If you were in the meadows late,
When evening dewes were falling,
When whistling thrush was calling—
A song to please his nesting mate:
Dewes fast falling, thrushes calling—
While the hour was wearing late:

If you have plucked the scented rose,
And dainty cowslip yellow,
Amid the marshes mellow—
No sweeter flowers Dame Nature grows:
Cowslips yellow, marshes mellow,
And the scented, sweet-briar rose:

If you have seen fair Venus' star,
Low in the west still twinkling,
Yet slowly, slowly sinking—
Still beaming as it sets afar:
Downward sinking, gleaming, twinkling,
Sets the glorious evening-star:

Songs In Many Keys

Then, oh then, you thought, I know,
Of him whose heart was yearning,
And ever homeward turning—
Who dream'd of you, 'mid evening's glow!
Homeward turning, longing, yearning—
Who dream'd of you, 'mid evening's glow!

THE RECONCILIATION.

Of all the hours I ever spent,
Those hours I hold most dear,
When One her gracious presence lent,—
Who now no more is near!
I call'd her Sweetheart, press'd her cheek
With many a tender kiss;
But time forbids that Name to speak,
And mocks at youthful bliss!

And yet I can no more forget
When Love first cross'd my way,
Than morning-rose her leaves to wet,
Or sun to light the day!

Songs In Many Keys

I call'd her Sweetheart—youthful dreams!
Doom'd like the day to die!—
And yet those ling'ring sunset-beams
Still light my evening sky!

I call'd her Sweetheart then, and yet —
Thro' all these stormy years,
That face I can no more forget
Than Time can dry Love's tears,—
Tears not of grief, but tender, deep,
Rich treasures of the Past!—
A vision! let the fond heart weep!
My old Sweetheart at last!

LINES TO A YOUNG URCHIN:

Young urchin, toddlin' with uncertain gait
Along the street,
Be careful of your steps, or soon or late,
Mischance, you'll meet
Such sights as terrify the grown-up race—
Be careful, man'kin! with your toddlin' pace!

Songs In Many Keys

The big, black dogs that love to congregate
Beside the road,
Are prone by nature to investigate
A stagg'ring load,
Such as your wicker-basket bears within:
To ease its weight a bit they hold no sin!

Or if some bigger lad, with hungry maw,
Begins to pry
Among the paper parcels, spite of law,
You must not cry,—
But show your mettle, lad! defend your right!
I would be loath to see you turn in flight!

Why, legs so short were scarcely framed to run!
Such sturdy shanks!
A chubby lad like you thrives best on fun
And boyish pranks!
And yet you'll not have many years to wait
For manly step, instead of toddlin' gait!

Songs In Many Keys

TO A CHILD.

To mortals is it seldom given,
To see a sight so rare :
Such love and sweet simplicity,
In one so truly fair !

Ah, how shall erring human pen,
Describe such gentle grace ?
Or how shall empty words avail
To paint an angel's face !

Then do not marvel at the art
Which tells of fairy ways ;
Once seen, no mortal could resist
To sing her worth and praise.

Dear child, you cannot understand
The devious ways of earth,—
Nor need you, if you seek alone,
Things of noblest worth.

Songs In Many Keys

SONGS THAT MOTHER USED TO SING.

A tear or smile, whiche'er it be,
Fond thoughts unbidden, rouse in me,
And summon back from bygone days
The scenes long lost in childhood's maze,
While in my ear there seem to ring
The songs which mother used to sing!

Ah, yes, 'twas in the evening-glow,
When ruddy sun, then sinking low,
Cast on the sky a fading light
And bade to earth a long good-night!
We children round her knee would cling
To hear that voice angelic sing.

Those simple lays, like words of prayer,
Could waft away each childish care;
Such doubts or fears as flecked the day
Soon like a shadow stole away:—
What joy that hour could always bring
When mother's voice began to sing.

Songs In Many Keys

"Hush, hush, my dears! in slumber lie,
For angels bright are watching nigh!"
Pure songs of childhood, all too fleet!
That made our evening-hour so sweet!
Tonight I hear them echoing,
Those songs which mother used to sing!

We're scattered now thro' many lands,
In mountains, plains, by ocean's sands,—
And yet that distant home draws near
And from the Past I know I hear
Those songs, in tender accents ring,—
I hear again my mother sing!

GOOD-BYE.

The time has come to say "good-bye!"
As friends we've met, as friends we part;
Yet pray repress the mournful sigh—
The witness of a heavy heart,—
"Good-bye, good-bye!"—a solemn word:
Would that its tones might ne'er be heard!

Songs In Many Keys

We met as friends upon life's way,
We've pass'd how many pleasing hours,
And as each day succeeded day
We've gather'd friendship's fadeless flowers:
But now "good-bye!"—that oft-spoke word,
One which we vainly wish deferr'd!

The lad who left the family home,
Who kiss'd a mother's tear-stained face,
Then turned away afar to roam,
Can still recall the tender grace
With which she spoke the last "good-bye!"—
A word her lips should sanctify!

"Good-bye, good-bye!"—on ev'ry hand
We hear fond lips repeat the phrase:
Love, Youth, Old Age, life's motley band
All say "good-bye" with downcast gaze:
And yet "good-bye" may ope the door
Where we need speak that word no more!

Songs In Many Keys

SHOSHONE CRADLE SONG.

Chorus:

An Indian babe should make no cry :
Who knows what foe is lurking nigh !
Who knows what foe is lurking nigh !

Hush ! hush ! my child, sh— do not cry !

The Darkness will not hurt thee :
The Moon is rising in the sky,
The yellow Moon is rising high,—
Come, Indian baby, come and see !

Be still, my child, and have no fear !

The Shadows will not harm thee :
Some hooting owl is drawing near,
'Tis but his chatter that we hear,—
Come, Shoshone baby, come to me !

The night is chill, the Moon is cold !

The wigwam-fire will warm thee :
Then come, my child, let owlets scold ;
Some day thou 'ilt be a warrior bold,—
No Shadows then will make thee flee !

Songs In Many Keys

Chorus:

An Indian babe should make no cry :
Who knows what foe is lurking nigh !
Who knows what foe is lurking nigh !

THE LOVER'S DREAM.

How sweet, in cool and twilight air,
To see a maid with sable hair,
With winsome grace, with starry eyes,
Which thrill the heart with glad surprise.

With glad surprise we feel the charm—
The love which gushes full and warm ;
That fills the breast with longings sweet,
And draws two hearts as one to beat.

The liquid trill of nightingale
Is music meet for moonlight pale ;
While all our chords of being know
The fatal shafts from Cupid's bow.

Songs In Many Keys

RAIN IN CALIFORNIA.

Listen to the falling rain,
Dashing, splashing to the ground,
With its cool, refreshing sound
Dripping on the leaves again!

All the hills so dry and sere ;
Parched and brown the fields of brakes ;
But the falling water makes
Transformation in the year!

* * * * *

Thus Nature works her marvelous change,
From colors dark to richest hue
As rare as heaven's ethereal blue,
Each year repeated, but as strange.

For gentle rains refresh the strand,
Beside the blue Pacific's shore,
When Autumn visits here once more,
Transmuting all the golden land!

Songs In Many Keys

A HARVEST SONG.

First Voice:

“Sing the song of golden grain!
Sing a song of gathered sheaves!
Sing of frost—of dying leaves—
Sing of clouds, of coming rain!”

Second Voice:

“Who hath planted herb and tree?
Who hath mixed the hoar-frost’s dye?
Gathered rain-clouds in the sky?
Scattered flowers on wold and lea?”

Third Voice:

“Who hath ripened seas of grain?
Calling workers to the field
Ready to the sickle yield—
Held in check the blighting rain?”

Songs In Many Keys

First Voice:

"Hard the task to sing of Man;
Fields of grain and gathered sheaves;
Rain-clouds dark or faded leaves—
Save we speak of Nature's plan!"

Chorus:

"God of Nature! tell to me
Something of Thy wondrous ways;
All the earth proclaims Thy praise;
How I long to learn of Thee!"

THE BELFRY CLOCK.

The dreamer lies by sleep oppress'd,
Tho' Noon is hurrying on her hour;
List—the tolling bell's protest
On high, in belfry tower.

Songs In Many Keys

One—hear the summons deep!

Wake! ere that voice has gone!

What?—will the sluggard idly sleep

While Time is rushing on?

Two—three—four—five—

Loud and clear strike warning chimes!

How the air those echoes rive!—

Awake and stir betimes!

Six—seven—eight—nine—

Sound yon bell with all its power!

Rouse the sleeper, Lord Divine,

To meet Thy approaching hour!

Ten!—no, he only moans,

Tho' the bell is ringing clear;

Eleven!—solemn warning tones!—

And yet he will not hear!

Twelve!—the fateful hour has pass'd!

Ah, Time, alas, you could not wait!

The sluggard still is sleeping fast—

Too late! too late! too late!

Songs In Many Keys

THE VOICE OF THE BATTLE.

In the clash of the steel, in the battle-array,
In the clatter of hoofs and the horses' mad neigh,
In the rush of the charge, 'tis rare music we
hear,—

Oh, the conflict's hoarse roar to a soldier is dear!

Hark the boom of the guns and the roll of the
drum,

Telling loud to the hosts Death's wild legions
have come!

See Him ride wide a-field, with His keen saber
bare,—

Hear the shrieks of the lost, wildly rending the
air!

Then oh!—and still onward our course let us
urge

In the sweep of the charge to the fierce battle's
verge:

Songs In Many Keys

Come the legions of Death! who will put us to
flight!

Oh, the voice of the battle! 'tis the soldier's
delight!

TOLERATION.

"Forbid him not," Christ saith to thee;

"No man can lightly speak of me

"Who in my name shall wonders do—

"The harvest's great, the lab'ers few:

"Forbid him not! Forbid him not!"

The cup of water may be small

To proffer to the Lord of All:

And yet the Master let us know

Such gift will not unheeded go:

"Forbid him not! Forbid him not!"

Songs In Many Keys

The faith that falters sore oppress'd
With doubts if such deeds can be blest,
Should gain new insight from the Word
When Jesus' kindly voice is heard:
"Forbid him not! Forbid him not!"

WHEN THOU ART NEAR.
(Tune, "*When Thou Art Near.*")

When Thou art near I shall not fear the night!—
Thou givest rest!
Thy yoke is easy and Thy burden is light!—
Thy way is best!
In life, in death, O Risen Christ, I pray
Vouchsafe Thy peace, that passeth not away!

The road of life ofttimes is very dark,
And storm oppress'd;
I look in vain for light, but fail to mark
The Place of Rest,—

Songs In Many Keys

Until, until I seek for Thee, and find
The Power that rules the waves and boist'rous
wind.

Tho' hard and heavy seems the chast'ning hand,
Upon me press'd,
I turn thro' faith to Thee, and understand
With God is rest!
Help, Master, help my feeble faith to see
How all-sustaining Love protecteth me!

Guide, Master, guide me, lest I go astray,—
Thou knowest best:
For Thou to man hast shown the Perfect Way
To God and Rest!
However far my erring footsteps roam
I'll find thro' Thee, at last, sweet Rest and Home!

Songs In Many Keys

HOW FIRM OF HEART, HOW
UNDISMAYED!

(Tune "Bera.")

How firm of heart, how undismayed,
Who on the Lord his trust hath stayed:
Thro' every ill he goes secure,
From doubt and fears he liveth free,
No foe his onset dare endure,—
Since God will his Defender be!

What broad foundations are those made,
That on the Rock of Truth are laid:
The winds may drive, the rains may fall;
Creeds, dogmas, doctrines shift like sand;
Yet Truth endureth thro' it all,
For Truth is God's Almighty Hand!

How strong that hope and full of cheer,
Which sees how God is ever near:
For tho' he lights the sun above,
And stars and systems have His care,
The smallest creature shares His love,—
His Guardian-power is everywhere!

Songs In Many Keys

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER.

Our God, our Father Thou, who art in heav'n,
Unto Thy holy Name be all praise giv'n ;
Thy glorious kingdom come to us today,
Thy blessed will be done 'mong men alway,
Throughout the earth as in the heav'ns on high ;
This day, as ever, hear the hunger'd cry—
And feed with Israel's manna from the sky ;
As we forgive, on us Thy grace bestow !
When near temptation's awful pit we go,
Oh let Thy child God's strong deliv'rance know ;
For Thine the kingdom is, Almighty Love !
All power Thine, on earth, in realms above ;
Thy glory, passing human speech to tell,
Forever and forever here doth dwell :

Thy Love Divine bespeaks a Father's care ;
Thy blessings flow ere we can frame a prayer !
So, with pure, child-like faith we call to Thee
And trust today Thy All-Sufficiency !

Songs In Many Keys

FOR AGES AND FOR AGES.

For ages and for ages
The mystery lay concealed,
Until in gospel pages
The Truth had been revealed;
Here man first learned the story
Of God's surpassing love,
In sending down from glory
The Lord Christ from above.

The cross which Paul was preaching
Was raised for every man,
A reconciliation teaching,
To God's eternal plan;
His child so sadly sinning,
Now leaves its evil ways,
For boundless love is winning,
All earth to sing His praise!

Songs In Many Keys

TRAVELLERS.

I.

The Light which streams from ancient days
Displays its beams to guide man's feet :
With joy how travellers thrill to meet
The rays which rive the darkened maze,
And lead their steps thro' pathways plain,—
Else had the struggle been in vain !

II.

As on a journey one looks back
And marvels at the winding road
His feet have press'd with weary load ;
And still ahead he sees the track
Go coiling round the mountain-height,
And halts in wonder at the sight :

Songs In Many Keys

III.

So have I stood, entranc'd to see
The Past close linked to what is now;
Ev'n as the green and spreading bough
Springs from the trunk of parent tree;
So is the road we travel on:
Behind, ahead, it all is one.

IV.

The God who formed this wondrous earth
Is very good; He works thro' Love
And binds us to Him from above
With chains of golden, priceless worth:
Nor can we stray beyond His care,
A Guardian-Power felt everywhere.

V.

For when thy soul had ceased to pray,
And lips were dumb with silentness,
Did He who made thee cease to bless,
Or send thee empty on thy way?
The Heart that framed the sum of all
Can even mark the sparrow's fall.

Songs In Many Keys

VI.

Life's road looks dark; we make it so:
We stumble on with blinded eye,
Tho' near at hand that Pow'r stands by
To grant release from earth-born woe:
Yes, even heaven lies close at hand,
And not in some far-distant land!

VII.

In grief, in tears, we mourn the loss
Of one held dear as life itself,—
A little child, a tender elf,—
And bear its absence as life's cross:
A thing so hard to understand,
Supposed to come by Love's command!

VIII.

Yet I cannot be brought to feel
That Love sends evil unto man,
Or that 'tis writ in God's great plan
To give His children aught but weal:
So much exists not understood,
And seeming evil turns to good.

Songs In Many Keys

IX.

We much distort the things we see,
And build up evil in our thought,
Until the mind itself has wrought
A monstrous thing from fantasy:
When, out of nothingness, there stands
A horrid shape with clutching hands!

X.

Alas for those who fail to raise
Their eyes from earth to God above;
Could they but know that God is love
How soon their lips would speak His praise:
And bless His all-abounding grace,—
Could they but see a Father's face!

XI.

The blade of grass beneath thy feet
In humble beauty holds its place,
Mere strip of green, yet full of grace,
But not less useful than the larger wheat:
The lesson of its speech-tied tongue
Is full as noble, tho' unsung.

Songs In Many Keys

XII.

Some measure by a common rule
The orbit of the planet Mars,
And all the clustering hosts of stars,—
Like that once show'd them when at school!
Nor do they grasp the broader thought
Which Science to the world hath brought.

XIII.

Yet telescope cannot disclose
The life that lurks within the seed;
Where some see nothing but a weed,
There others watch a budding rose:
For star and plant, each have their place,
And both fulfill their destined race.

XIV.

The mysteries of the Universe,
I cannot hope to solve them here;
At times their meanings grow more clear,
As sunbeams oft the clouds disperse;
But when those clouds obscure my sight
Then all is lost again in night.

Songs In Many Keys

XV.

Yet step by step the foot ascends
That winding road, tho' hard and steep;
As children, first we only creep,
Till manly strength its vigor lends:
And if the mists roll back a space
We bless the blue sky's glorious face!

STEP BY STEP.

There was a time when all the earth was bright,
Illum'd by radiant glories from the sky,—
A visionary dream that floated nigh,
Reflecting colors like the rainbow's light;

So fresh looked life, so fond her youthful dreams:
Undarkened by dull Shadows of the Past
Which now, alas, my skies oft overcast,
Obscuring from my sight those morning-beams!

Songs In Many Keys

Those tranquil hours, with speeding Time, have
fled;

Those hopeful visions have been laid aside;
All, all too iridescent to abide,—
Nor let the stout heart mourn that they are dead:

For years have brought to us a larger view;
We see how grand this world which God hath
made,
And as those visions waste away and fade,
Our daily tasks take on a heavenly hue.

So step by step we may ascend to Him,
Up from that Valley where the Shadow lay
Into that freer life, that perfect day,
Whose golden light no cloud shall ever dim.

A life of service is the noblest gift
Which man can tender as his meed of praise:
We thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast led our
ways!
For Light and Shade, to Thee our song we lift!

Songs In Many Keys

THE AUTUMN LEAF.

I saw a withered leaf upon the ground;
It lay there, dry and sere, a thing of death;
And winds were crooning many a solemn sound,
Among the reeds, embrowned by Autumn's
breath.

The elm which late had cast his shade,
Now naked stood—a melancholy sight;
The thrush and twitt'ring wren had fled dismay'd
When em'rald branches felt the Frost-King's
blight.

Ten thousand objects which my vision knew—
The myriad creatures of a summer's day—
Dun wren and sunlit flowers were gone from
view,
Old Earth herself seemed passing to decay!

Songs In Many Keys

Yet how could leaf thus fade and waste away,
Or thoughtless bird desert its nesting-bower,
If hidden forces were not here at play—
The wondrous workings of a Higher Power?

Thro' such a school, the struggling soul of man,
Beset by myst'ries all about him hurl'd,
Must learn the vastness of that mighty plan
Which weighs an atom and which builds a
world!

THE VOICE OF THE ORGAN.

The shadows of night are gathering around,
The darkness descending has covered the ground.

The bird in the grove has gone to her nest,
The earth is all quiet and sunken to rest.

Thro' rain and thro' mist the flickering taper
Flares dim in the dank and thick-curtain'd vapor.

Songs In Many Keys

The chimes of the vespers are hush'd to repose
By fog-cloud that stifles that sound as it goes.

The church-door, flung open, bids welcome to all
To enter within, thro' the dim-lighted hall.

Without there is naught but dampness and cold,
Within the high chancel is glitt'ring with gold.

The Master-Musician has taken his chair
And strains of sweet music are filling the air.

Like purling of waters, or birds' even-song,
The music, now started, is heard thro' the throng :

The tones of the organ, in sadness and sorrow,
Seem turn'd to the Past, quite forgetting the
Morrow ;

The eyes of the list'ners turn back to the day,
When Earth wore a splendor that promised to
stay.

Songs In Many Keys

Yet sadly the organist dwelt on that theme,
Well knowing things seen are not that which they
seem.

But when the musician had thus mused awhile,
His gloom sought relief in a more cheerful style:

The tones ringing clear in a high upper key
Re-echoed the music of earth and the sea;

'Twas the gurgling of waters among the cool
stones,

'Twas lispings of leaves, or the grove's organ-
tones—

When wandering winds have passed 'mong the
trees,

And musical branches are fanned by the breeze.

For harmonic measures were framed by 'Great
Pan

To bring the wide world to the service of man.

Songs In Many Keys

The soul of each instrument merely produces
Some apt phase of Nature, its voice, tone and
uses.

If 'raptured we hear such sweet songs and are
mute,
Then Nature hath spoken thro' cello and flute.

Yet Nature's not always so gladsome and gay:
For Life, like a shadow, goes fleeting away.

The swift seasons come, but they scarce can
abide,
Hurried like waters, which flow with the tide.

The leaves and the flowers are bright 'neath the
sky,
But when the day faileth they also must die!

So man, even man, tho' wide he may roam,
Soon heareth the summons that calleth him home.

Songs In Many Keys

With thoughts deeply saddened, traversing his
mind,

The player sought vainly expression to find.

His soul, like the organ, was panting for breath,
With visions before it of Time and of Death.

The strains that were uttered were solemn and
deep,

Like passing of Life to its long-promised Sleep.

* * * * *

The organ hath ceased its lament; not a sound
Disturbeth the church, or its darkness profound.

Sonnets

Songs In Many Keys

A VISION OF CALIFORNIA.

Upon the margin of the Western Sea,
Beside the heaving waters of the deep,
I sat and watched the slow tide inward creep,
And heard the singing waves with ecstasy—
Those magic waves, so charged with Destiny!
And still I list, while eager thoughts o'erleap
The things that are, for fields that Time shall
 reap
In broad'ning harvests of the days to be.
The vision of an empire grandly great,
Looms thro' the fog that rises from the wave;
The vision of a mighty golden State,
Whose sons are numbered 'mong earth's truly
 brave,
Because adorned by every noble trait—
Such is the vision which old Ocean gave.

Songs In Many Keys

LOVE AND TRUTH WORKING.

We marvel that the Christ in shame should die
Upon the cross, with thief to mock and scorn
At Him, alas! by cruel sorrows torn;
For seemed that Power Divine no longer nigh,
When agonized, He made His last dread cry:
And yet we know those bitter pains were borne
By one who blessed the hearts of those who
mourn—
Whose gentle soul could stifle every sigh.
The myst'ry stands confessed, most deep to
solve—
And thus may stand; for risen from that grave,
With healing in His wings, all earth to save,
His Spirit broods, while ages still revolve.
For Love and Truth work on a larger plan
Than seemeth just to narrow-minded man.

Songs In Many Keys

STORM AT SEA.

I love the tossing, ceaseless-rolling sea!
I love the din and music of its shore
Where high the waters, upward rushing, pour
Their floods of yeasty foam incessantly.
My soul is restless as thou seem'st to be;
I share thy treasures—all that ample store
Of kingly storms and winds is mine; the more
Thou givest, the vaster thine immensity!
The full-orbed moon, while peaceful sleeps the
storm,
Rules waves that have not ceased their constant
flow
Tho' long the fickle winds have ceased to blow.
But when the savage tempest rears his form,
And frightened sky is lashed by raging sea,
Thy roaring waves are crowned with majesty!

Songs In Many Keys

A MIND OF CALM CONTENT.

The man who hath a mind of calm content,
Is not less rich than he whose ample field
Doth yearly to his groaning warehouse yield
Full store of Nature's products freely lent.
For him, no dearth of rain can e'er prevent
From satisfaction to his fullest need.
His heart is not oppressed by envious greed,
But thankful, he accepts what gifts are sent.
Such man, indeed, fills no unworthy place:
He will not brook the rasp of trivial things,
But seeks the peace which firm Contentment
brings,—
Not least 'mong those who have adorn'd the race.
A Pearl of Greatest Price is true Content;
And rich that man, to whom such gift is sent.

Songs In Many Keys

A MILLION YEARS BUT AS YESTERDAY.

The roots of life are buried in the Past,
Men draw their growth from other days.
The world with Plato's thought is yet ablaze;
The deathless Word of Christ grows still more
vast!

The secret thought that springeth up at last—
Like wheat long stored in Cheop's mystic maze
Of chambered pyramids, thro' devious ways
Will reach its hour: for now the seed has cast
Its husk aside,—the glorious growth attests
The Garden of the Gods would grow each
flower

When Nature may the best impart her power,
As each in turn the sun with life invests.
For measuring Nature in a larger way
A million years are but as yesterday!

Songs In Many Keys

MOTHER AND CHILD.

A mother with her child upon her breast
A slumber-song is heard to softly sing,—
Or song or prayer, God knows,—still uttering
The calm content of Love, and Hope, and Rest :
Thus sweetly, as a birdling to its nest,
The little one, now borne on angel's wing,
Has pass'd to slumber-land, while hands yet
cling
To Her,—still praying that it may be blest :
Then slumber calm and deep my baby child !
While hosts of angels guard thy infant feet,
Which patter, patter thro' the dream-land
street !
Ah ! slumber deep, by golden dreams beguiled !
Thus Love, divine, hath let her children know
The bliss of heaven, while yet on earth below.

Songs In Many Keys

TRANSFORMING POWER OF LOVE.

Love struck his heart with harmony divine—

The waking chords responded, sweet to hear;
And even the heavenly hosts appeared more
near,

When evening's lucent star began to shine.

Wide earth stood decked with splendors of the
mine,—

With diamonds, sapphires, rubies, sparkling
clear;

The thrushes' warbling song, unto his list'ning
ear

Came from the thicket where the roses twine.

The crimson glory of the evening sky;

The sun's bald beams; the shadows as they
pass;

The lights and shades that play upon the
grass;

All these were framed to please the lover's eye!

For Love, with airy grasp, doth lightly hold

The Midas-touch that turns the earth to gold.

Songs In Many Keys

THE LIGHT PROPHETIC.

In this dark pilgrimage which mankind makes,
Those brave of soul, like beacon's flare on
 high,
Still flash their welcome light athwart the
 sky ;
Altho' the dashing wave with thunder breaks
Along the rocky shore, that trembling quakes
 Beneath the tumult roaring hoarsely nigh.
Tho' loud the shrieking tempests wildly cry—
The bold of heart such danger never shakes.
Like Atlas who uplifts his giant form,
And holds the sky from falling down to earth,
These men, by kingly deeds, have prov'n their
 worth,
And freely battled with the raging storm.
The light prophetic which such spirits cast
Dispels the gloom which shrouds the lurid
 Past.

Songs In Many Keys

THE COMMONS.

How all admire the progress of mankind!

What marvels have been framed—on earth, in
air!

How great that Power which reaches every-
where,—

The broad dominion of Creative Mind.

Go searching thro' the ages, still we find

How Progress limitless hath stationed there

Brave leaders sent to clear life's thoroughfare:

A Moses, John, or Prophet Milton blind,—

Who toiled to save the struggling human-race:

Their deeds are epic songs; they each and all

Have nobly sought, at Duty's clarion call,

To do their tasks—to fill their appoint'd place.

Thus grandly, too, have ev'n the Commons
wrought,

In deeds unsung, in unrecorded thought.

Songs In Many Keys

TRUTH IS CHANGELESS.

Beneath the sun we find there's nothing new ;
All things that are, have been and yet will be ;
Time stealeth on his way how silently !
An Age hath come, ere his approach we view.
The flowers which childhood's fancy ever grew
Have withered down : their loss we failed to
see
Until we stumbled on the vacant lea,
Where, in our youth, the flower-clad mead we
knew.
The ceaseless change comes round to all in turn :
Seed time and merry harvest shall not fail,
Nor sunny hours, nor snow, nor heat, nor
hail,—
While moon and stars upon their courses burn.
Yet things we see are not what they appear—
They seem to change,—but changeless Truth
is here !

Songs In Many Keys

THE POWER OF FAITH.

The Doubting Thomas never will believe
Until to him the gaping wounds are bared;
His halting faith has never boldly dared
The beaten track of daily life to leave:
And yet, in secret, he must deeply grieve
O'er idle fears,—so thoughtlessly declared—
O'er doubts—which strong-willed Peter never
shared—

Concerning One who no man would deceive.
By faith the martyrs thro' the ages past
Have vanquished death, and gained a golden
crown;

Thro' faith, stout Luther hurl'd defiance down
And met the mad assaults against him cast.
Without Faith's aid in ruin earth would fall:
How vast her power sublime, supporting all!

Songs In Many Keys

THE TRUE VICTOR.

What! tremblest thou, because thy way looks
dark;

Because thy feet have erred and gone astray;
Because thy road has been a troubled way,
And fail'd to reach the ev'r retreating mark?

O helpless doubter! if thou canst but hark,
The voice of strong-willed Courage shall essay
To call those latent forces into play,
Which wait but to receive the eager spark
To touch them into flame. Within the mind

God set a power to conquer every ill;
He conquers best who truly says, "I will!"
And boldly presses on, though almost blind.
Not he who never fell shall win the crown,
But he who stoutly rose again when down.

Songs In Many Keys

NOBILITY OF WORK.

He sees the port, while breakers loudly roar
And lash his tossing boat. Against the tide
He stoutly pulled, his eager power applied
To breast the flood that battled on the shore;
For well he knew that man can work no more
When night at last has come; each task he
tried

Was treated as a trust by heaven supplied,
Whereon he could a hero's strength outpour.
Life is not made of idle, empty dreams—
A vacant child of vast eternity—
A thing devoid of all sincerity—
But life is work, and with work's blessing
teems.

Man gains nobility thro' toil and strife;
The worker but fulfills the ends of life.

Songs In Many Keys

PRISONERS OF HOPE.

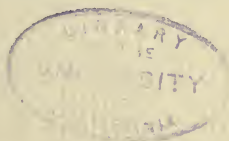
Forget! methinks 'tis not so harsh a thing
That one should lay aside the cares that fret
His daily life, and for a time forget;
The 'prisoned thrush will not refuse to sing!
His notes with woodland gladness ever ring:
When flutt'ring wings by iron bars are met,
Ev'n this he thinks not ill he should forget—
His care-free heart with joy re-echoing!
The free-born soul refuses to be bound,
Tho' thousand petty evils round it rise;
'T were shame, indeed, to grovel on the ground
When overhead such wondrous beauty lies:
Eternal goodness circling man around,—
If caged? Then caged by canopy of skies!

Songs In Many Keys

THE PROBLEM.

From mystery to mystery we go!

The grass that spreads its glossy leaf to day
Lives life as perfect, in its humble way,
As gaudy orchids, deck'd for gorgeous show.
The wind's unceasing journey to and fro,
But who, presumptuous, can their courses say?
Who sees the future of the child at play?
Who claims, of life the hidden springs to know?
The everlasting hills, of old ordain'd,
All speak the presence of Creative Mind:
In these huge forms the wakeful soul may
find,
The hand of Him whose fiat Chaos chain'd:
Still—who, the Why, the Whence, the Where
can see?
All this remains to man a mystery!



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